

Inspection of a good school: Garstang Community Academy

Bowgreave, Garstang, Preston, Lancashire PR3 1YE

Inspection dates:

17 and 18 January 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Garstang Community Academy is a tight-knit community. Leaders' vision is for pupils to 'grow, care and achieve'. To this end, leaders have high expectations of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Many pupils do their best to rise to the expectations that staff have for them. However, some pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

Pupils' behaviour at social times is calm, and this helps pupils to feel safe in school. Most pupils manage their own behaviour well. However, during lessons, some staff do not follow the behaviour policy well enough to tackle the disruptive behaviour of a small minority of pupils. From time to time, this disrupts pupils' learning.

Leaders have taken steps to ensure that incidents of bullying are dealt with quickly and effectively. Some pupils are proud to have been appointed as anti-bullying ambassadors. That said, some pupils are not confident that leaders will deal with the concerns that they raise about bullying.

Pupils speak proudly about the opportunities that they have to represent their school in activities such as sporting competitions. The newly formed student leadership teams have launched projects to support pupils' well-being.

There is a range of clubs on offer that support pupils' academic learning and develop their interests such as playing chess and spotlight performing arts academy. Most pupils are happy to attend school each day.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

In recent months, trust leaders have taken decisive action to ensure that there is stability

in leadership. However, the turbulence of the previous year has had a detrimental effect on the whole school community. This has caused parents, carers, pupils and staff to lose confidence in the leadership of the school. Leaders are working to foster a culture where kindness and integrity are at the core. However, this has only just started recently. It is too early to see if leaders' actions are making a difference to staff's views and pupils' behaviour.

Leaders have thought clearly about the curriculum, which is broad and ambitious for all pupils, including those with SEND. Pupils learn the full range of national curriculum subjects at key stage 3. However, the number of pupils studying the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects is low and declining. This is because few pupils choose to study a language at key stage 4. Leaders have taken appropriate action to rectify this and ensure that the key stage 3 curriculum prepares pupils well for the demands of an academic curriculum in key stage 4.

Across the curriculum, leaders have ensured that the essential building blocks of knowledge that pupils need to learn are identified. Teachers revisit prior learning to help pupils embed key concepts. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure. They design learning well to support pupils to gain a rich understanding of the subject that they study.

Over the last few months, there have been recent changes to how teachers use assessment techniques to check on pupils' learning. This work has been effective. Teachers are using the information from assessment activities well to reshape their teaching so that pupils can go over any areas where they have misconceptions. Teachers ensure that key learning is revisited regularly so that pupils can remember more.

Leaders have made reading a priority in the school. Staff have received high-quality training and resources to be able to deliver the reading canon sessions. Leaders ensure that they identify, in key stage 3, those who find reading difficult. Staff provide effective support to help these pupils to catch up quickly.

Pupils typically are engaged well in their learning. Most teachers deal swiftly with any low-level misbehaviour. However, some lessons are disrupted by a minority of pupils. This means that other pupils cannot focus and do not learn as well as they should. Some staff and pupils, through their discussions with inspectors and their responses to Ofsted's questionnaires, shared their concerns about the negative impact this poor behaviour has on teaching and learning.

Some pupils do not want to report bullying for fear of repercussions or that their concerns will not be taken seriously. Leaders are taking action to build pupils' confidence in the systems to keep them safe from harassment. For example, they have recently introduced a 'CARE' strategy and appointed anti-bullying ambassadors. However, it is early days and too soon to see if leaders' approach is making a difference.

Leaders provide pupils with appropriate relationship, health and sex education. The careers provision is well thought out. For example, the weekly focus on a range of employment options through 'Future Friday' builds pupils' aspirations around careers. Pupils in Year 11 are extremely well informed about their next steps.

Leaders identify quickly the needs of pupils with SEND. Staff are trained well to support these pupils to access the curriculum alongside their peers.

Some staff feel that leaders consider their workload and well-being. However, a number of staff feel that workload is not taken into consideration when leaders make decisions.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have successfully created a culture of safeguarding at the school. They act swiftly to manage any concerns that arise around safeguarding. There are robust procedures in place for recording safeguarding concerns that allow leaders to check that appropriate action has been taken. Leaders work effectively with other agencies to ensure that pupils receive timely support. The trust supports leaders in managing safeguarding concerns about staff.

The personal, social and health education curriculum addresses sexual harassment, and leaders respond to any allegations appropriately. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe online and about healthy and unhealthy relationships.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some parents, pupils and staff have lost trust in school leaders. As a result, staff morale and pupils' response to the leaders' expectations have dropped. Leaders should ensure that they continue to work positively with all stakeholders to regain their confidence.
- A minority of pupils do not behave as they should, because some staff do not apply leaders' behaviour systems as intended. This hinders teachers from teaching, and it disrupts the learning of other pupils. Leaders should ensure that staff have the same high expectations of all pupils and that they apply the behaviour policy consistently.
- Some pupils are reluctant to express their concerns about bullying. This is because they are not confident that leaders will listen to them or take action to resolve the issues. Leaders should ensure that they engender a culture where all pupils are able to speak up against bullying. Leaders should also ensure that they have more effective procedures for dealing with such incidents.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be

a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2018.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	137342
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10256112
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	828
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Kim Carlyle
Headteacher	Satinder Singh
Website	http://garstangcommunityacademy.com
Date of previous inspection	9 January 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There have been recent changes to the leadership of the school. The current headteacher has been in post since January 2023. The executive headteacher acted as interim headteacher from September to December 2022 after the resignation of the previous headteacher.
- The school is part of Fylde Coast Academy Trust.
- Leaders use seven registered alternative provisions for a small number of pupils.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the executive headteacher, the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and members of staff. The lead inspector also met with the chief executive officer of the trust and representatives of the governing body.
- Inspectors completed deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, history, physical education and science. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the

curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils from Years 7 to 11 about their experience of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation document, minutes of trust board meetings and records of pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors held meetings with the staff responsible for safeguarding. Inspectors considered leaders' safeguarding processes and procedures. Inspectors discussed safeguarding with pupils and staff.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses to staff and pupil questionnaires.

Inspection team

Jenny Jones, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Paula Crawley

Ofsted Inspector

Stephen Ruddy

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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